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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/755,962	01/12/2004	Kevin Ray Beutler	9539-000081	3008
27572	7590	09/19/2005	EXAMINER	
HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.			HO, HA DINH	
P.O. BOX 828				
BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48303			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3681	

DATE MAILED: 09/19/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/755,962	BEUTLER, KEVIN RAY
	Examiner Ha D. Ho	Art Unit 3681

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 June 2005.
2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 13 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) 6-12 is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/12/04.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. This is the first Office Action on the merits of Application No. 10/755,962 filed on 01/12/04. Claims 1-13 are currently pending.

Election/Restrictions

2. Applicant's election without traverse of the invention of Group 1, claims 1-12, in the reply filed on 6/28/05 is acknowledged.
3. Claim 13 is withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on 6/28/05.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
5. Claims 6-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 6 and 12 contain the trademark/trade name "salisbury". Where a trademark or trade name is used in a claim as a limitation to identify or describe a particular material or product, the claim does not comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. See *Ex parte Simpson*, 218 USPQ 1020 (Bd. App. 1982). The claim scope is uncertain since the

trademark or trade name cannot be used properly to identify any particular material or product.

A trademark or trade name is used to identify a source of goods, and not the goods themselves.

Thus, a trademark or trade name does not identify or describe the goods associated with the trademark or trade name. In the present case, the trademark/trade name is used to identify/describe a type of differential gear unit and, accordingly, the identification/description is indefinite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 6-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Prior Art, Figures 1 and 2, (hereafter APA) in view of Horvath (US 3,643,968) and Takami et al. (US 4,508,072).

APA shows an axle assembly comprising a differential housing 14 having a housing mounting face (the face on the housing 24 that contacts the gasket 28), a gear assembly 17, a removable housing cover 22 having a cover mating face (the face on the cover 22 that contacts the gasket 28) and a plurality of fastening apertures (the bolt holes on the cover 22), a plurality of fasteners 26, and a seal ring 28.

APA does not show a compression limiting member associated with at least one of the housing cover and the fasteners.

Horvath discloses a seal ring (see Figs 3 and 4) having at least one compression limiting member 23.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to replace the seal ring of APA by the seal ring of Horvath in order to prevent any lateral blowing out or squeezing out of the seal ring (col. 3, lines 50-54).

APA and Horvath do not show the seal ring permanently affixed to the housing cover.

Takami et al shows a sealing device that has a seal ring 19 permanently affixed to the housing cover 10.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to affix the seal ring to the housing cover as taught by Takami et al to prevent from coming off of the seal ring (col. 7, lines 41-50).

The modified assembly would have all the features recited in claims 7-10.

Allowable Subject Matter

8. Claims 1-5 are allowed.
9. Claim 11 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
10. Claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action.
11. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:
The prior art of record does not disclose or render obvious a motivation to provide for an axle

assembly including a housing cover having raised connection points, and the seal ring encircling each of the raised connection points as defined by the limitations of claim 1; including raised connection points formed on the housing cover and which are raised from the cover mating face as defined by the limitations of claim 11; and including raised connection points integral to the housing cover, and the seal ring encircling the raised connection points as defined by the limitations of claim 12.

Cited Prior Art

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure: Shimmell'461, Covington'958, Sihon'109, Ang et al'603, Surbrook et al.'023, Inamura'599, Fluck et al.'498, Schleth et al.'739, and Suehiro et al'667 which each shows seal/gasket device.

Communication

13. Submission of your response by facsimile transmission is encouraged. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are **(571) 273-8300**. Recognizing the fact that reducing cycle time in the processing and examination of patent applications will effectively increase a patent's term, it is to your benefit to submit responses by facsimile transmission whenever permissible. Such submission will place the response directly in our examining group's hands and will eliminate Post Office processing and delivery time as well as the PTO's mail room processing and delivery time. For a complete list of correspondence not permitted by facsimile transmission, see M.P.E.P. 502.01. In general, most responses and/or amendments not requiring a fee, as well as those requiring a fee but charging such fee to a deposit account, can be submitted by facsimile transmission. Responses requiring a fee which applicant is paying by check should not be submitting by facsimile transmission separately from the check. Responses submitted by facsimile transmission should include a Certificate of Transmission (M.P.E.P.. 512). The following is an example of the format the certification might take:

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to

the Patent and Trademark Office on _____
(Date)

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate:

(Signature)

If your response is submitted by facsimile transmission, you are hereby reminded that the original should be retained as evidence of authenticity (37 CFR 1.4 and M.P.E.P.. 502.02). Please do not separately mail the original or another copy unless required by the Patent and Trademark Office. Submission of the original response or a follow-up copy of the response after your response has been transmitted by facsimile will only cause further unnecessary delays in the processing of your application; duplicate responses where fees are charged to a deposit account may result in those fees being charged twice.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ha D. Ho whose telephone number is 571-272-7091. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Charles Marmor can be reached on 571-272-7095.

14. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

HDH
(571) 272-7091
September 15, 2005

Ha Ho
HA HO
PRIMARY EXAMINER
Art Unit 3681 9/15/05